alorica

Delighting Customers
in the Digital Age

Using Chat as Part of a

Great customer support is designed to solve customer problems quickly and painlessly.

Delighting Customers in the Digital Age

Introduction

By 2016, an estimated 20% of all customer experience will take place via chat.[i]

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To deliver exceptional customer care, companies are expanding their support services across multiple channels, including phone, email and social media, but… **no channel is more immediate, effortless and unobtrusive than live chat.**

Today, customers have a world of information available at their fingertips. They've come to expect real-time interactivity, and often perceive calling a help desk or sending email to be a time-wasting burden. Many abandon the process when presented with these outdated modes of communication. Meanwhile…

Instant chat lets your customers pose questions in-the-moment, and provides an opportunity to offer assistance if a customer is hovering on a page but not taking action.

Why is Chat so Important to the Customer Experience Ecosystem?

When properly executed, adding live chat can increase sales conversations, improve customer loyalty and reduce overhead costs. But the opposite holds true as well; if implemented poorly, live chat can frustrate customers and tarnish a brand's reputation. The secret to delighting customers is to ensure that the chat experience is backed by agents and online tools that can deliver quick, helpful information and solutions.

77% *of consumers look for answers online before calling.[ii]*
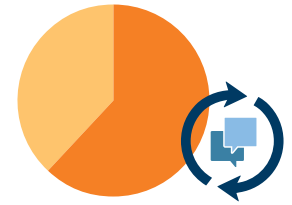
62% *of consumers were more likely to make another purchase from a website that offers live chat.[iii]*

73% *satisfaction rating for chat is the highest among all customer service channels.[iv]*

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Benefits of Live Chat

What are the Benefits of Live Chat?

Immediate Responsiveness Ninety percent of U.S. customers using live chat find it to be very helpful.[v] Chat wait times generally are far shorter than experienced when calling, and customers appreciate having instant access to the information they need.

Targeted Help Chat meets customers at their pain point by providing on-demand support. Agents can immediately pull up useful data (such as the customer's browsing history) and can address questions and concerns quickly, increasing the likelihood of conversion.

Improved Effciency Agents can handle multiple conversations simultaneously, lowering average interaction costs, increasing resolution rates and providing additional opportunities to market to the customer.

What are the Benefits of Live Chat?

44% *of online consumers answered by a live person while in the middle of an online purchase is one of the most important features*
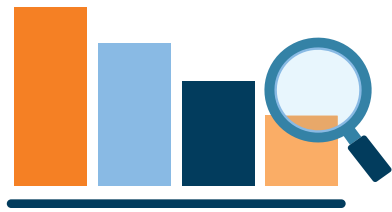
Minimized Errors
Customers and agents can provide account numbers, confirmation codes and other information by chat instead of over the phone, where mistakes can be common.

Valuable Data
An analysis of data (last page viewed, percentage of customers using a mobile device, common questions during live chat, etc.) can reveal opportunities to improve the user experience online and better meet customer needs.

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Live Chat

What Industries are Right for Chat?

Although chat can be beneficial to many organizations, certain industries are better suited to live chat than others. More and more, live chat is being used as a support channel in the following sectors:

Retail & E-Commerce

Chat helps remove barriers to purchase, and lets customers complete transactions as well as provide opportunities to up-sell and cross-sell.

Technology

Tech-savvy customers increasingly use self-service options, and live chat lets them feel like they resolved a problem on their own, (even when they get help from a chat agent).

Travel & Hospitality

Customers having difficulty with online booking or finding the best rates appreciate real-time support in the same channel.

Healthcare & Insurance

Because customer loyalty is no longer exclusively determined by their employer, healthcare companies are looking for additional tools to improve customer engagement and support.
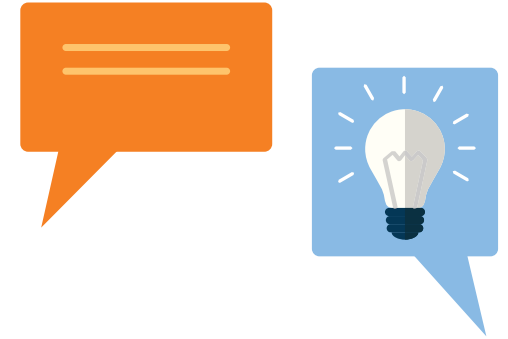
Is Chat the Right Solution?

In general, live chat is most useful for transactional businesses and consumer-oriented companies; however, it can be beneficial in a B2B context as well. Before implementing live chat on your website, consider these factors:

Know Your Audience. Think about whether your products and services are a good match for chat support, as well as the demographics of your customer base. For example, Gen X and Millennial users are more likely to prefer

60% *of customers hate waiting longer than one minute for support.* [vii]

Is Chat the Right Solution?

Determine the Scope. Do you need to have live chat available 24/7, or can you limit the hours of availability? A quick response time is critical, so consider whether you have the capacity to manage chat around the clock, and whether you can offer it on all pages of your website or only in certain sections. In addition, think about how to integrate chat with your existing support channels for sales and customer support.

Evaluate Your Options. Do you have the resources to train agents and implement chat in-house, or should you outsource the solution to a company with channel experience? Partnering with a third-party vendor can minimize ramp-up time and ensure an efficient workflow. Additionally, outsourced agencies often can provide useful analytics to identify common issues and improve internal operations.

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Three Keys to Doing

Alorica has identified three factors that are critical to providing world-class service and enhancing the customer experience through chat.

1 | Hire the Right Agents

The truth is, not all customer service professionals are well-suited for chat.

While agents who are good on the phone are patient and relaxed, those providing support via chat need to be fast and succinct. To meet the needs of the digital customer, agents handling live chat sessions should possess the following skills:

89% *of customers say speed of agent response and chatting with a "real person" are most important to the experience.*[viii]

Excellent Written Communication

In addition to typing speed and accuracy, agents should have a firm grasp of spelling and grammar to avoid making corrections that cause slower response times.

Strong Reading Comprehension

Agents must be able to decipher a customer's true issue quickly and accurately as early as possible in the interaction.

Ability to Multi-Task

Agents generally must handle multiple chat conversations at the same time, all while making each customer believe the agent's attention is solely on them.

Web Expertise

Customers in chat already have attempted self-service via the Web, and they expect the agent to be more skilled at finding the right answers than they are.

93% *of customers indicated the agent must know the website inside and out*

2 | Train Your Team

To be effective in chat, agents not only must be well-versed in functional and procedural skills and product knowledge, but they must also be specially trained for chat interactions. Live chat should provide a warm, human experience while still minimizing the time involved. Unlike a phone call, replies should be very short and to the point, yet not sound robotic.

Training topics for live chat include:
- How to identify customer issues and common problems
- Appropriate personalization and conversational style
- Effective use of chat system features, such as text snippets, timers, auto-responses and last page-visited data
- Methods of customer engagement to avoid in-chat downtime
- Knowing the right balance between canned and free-form responses
- Methods of uncovering customer needs and up-sell or cross-sell via chat
- Strategies to achieve containment within the channel

3 | Choose the Best Tools

Sourcing and implementing the right tools to enable insanely great customer experiences is a big decision. The most effective chat tools have the following capabilities.

- Co-browse/co-view
- Transcript email capabilities
- Predefined snippets of text
- Last visited page tracking
- Typing tracker
- Proactive chat offers

3 | Choose the Best Tools

Co-Browse/Co-View

The ability to view the customer's browser screen lets agents see where the customer is having difficulty. This tool is particularly useful when helping customers manage the checkout process, navigate a website, or troubleshoot a software issue. Our experience shows that introducing co-browse capabilities can deliver the following improvements:

- Reduced handle time
- Improved first contact resolution
- Fewer referrals to the voice channel
- Better customer experience scores
- Increased number of customers willing to try chat or self-service in the future

Transcript Email Capabilities

Providing customers with a transcript of the chat conversation greatly reduces the risk that the user will contact support again for the same issue and reduces downstream disputes about billing, terms and conditions, and other fine details customers tend to question post-sales. A transcript is especially valuable when the agent has sent the customer useful links or explained a process involving multiple steps. It can also help induce trust in the resolution provided to the customer by "putting it in writing."

Predefined Snippets of Text

A chat system that provides predefined text for greetings, common troubleshooting steps, and common questions can help agents better meet customer expectations for a speedy response and ensure consistency in messaging. In addition, predefined answers save the agents the time and hassle of crafting a separate reply to each customer that has the same issue.

3 | Choose the Best Tools

Last Visited Page Tracking

Serving up the customer's navigation history to the agent as they begin an interaction gives the agent a head start on understanding the customer's issue and fosters a timely and accurate response. In addition, data tracked and aggregated over time can provide valuable insight into the overall customer experience.

Typing Tracker

Many chat tools provide a typing tracker to indicate to each party that a response is in progress, helping pro-actively alleviate concerns about wait and response times. Additional real-time feedback about idle time between responses can also help agents keep an appropriate pace for chat.

Proactive Chat Offers

The best live chat platforms are capable of tracking consumer behavior over time and serving up a chat offer when it is most likely to be useful to the customer. Often, organizations will use a combination of static and dynamic buttons strategically placed on their website, and proactive chat offer designed to pre-empt common drivers of contact volume.

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Improve Customer Experience with Chat

How Can Companies Use Chat to Improve the Customer Experience?

As with any support channel, chat aims to provide a positive customer experience. Chat technology can identify why the contact was necessary, and pro-actively resolve customer issues to minimize the need for future support. As consumers shift to digital care platforms, chat is increasingly important as a means of capturing key analytics data and driving process improvements. Consider these facts:

- **Survey Response Rates** post-chat typically are more than 4x greater than Web or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system surveys.
- **Written Transcripts** make it easier to capture and analyze data regarding customer concerns and outcomes.
- **Tracking Tools** make it possible to identify the user path to the chat queue, providing further understanding of why and where customers need assistance.

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Measuring Success

How Do You Know if You are Getting the Most Value For Your Business From Chat?

In addition to the cost savings associated with reducing referrals to the voice channel, several other metrics can help you maximize your investment in live chat:

- Individual Agent Performance
- Satisfaction Data
- Visitor and Traffic Data
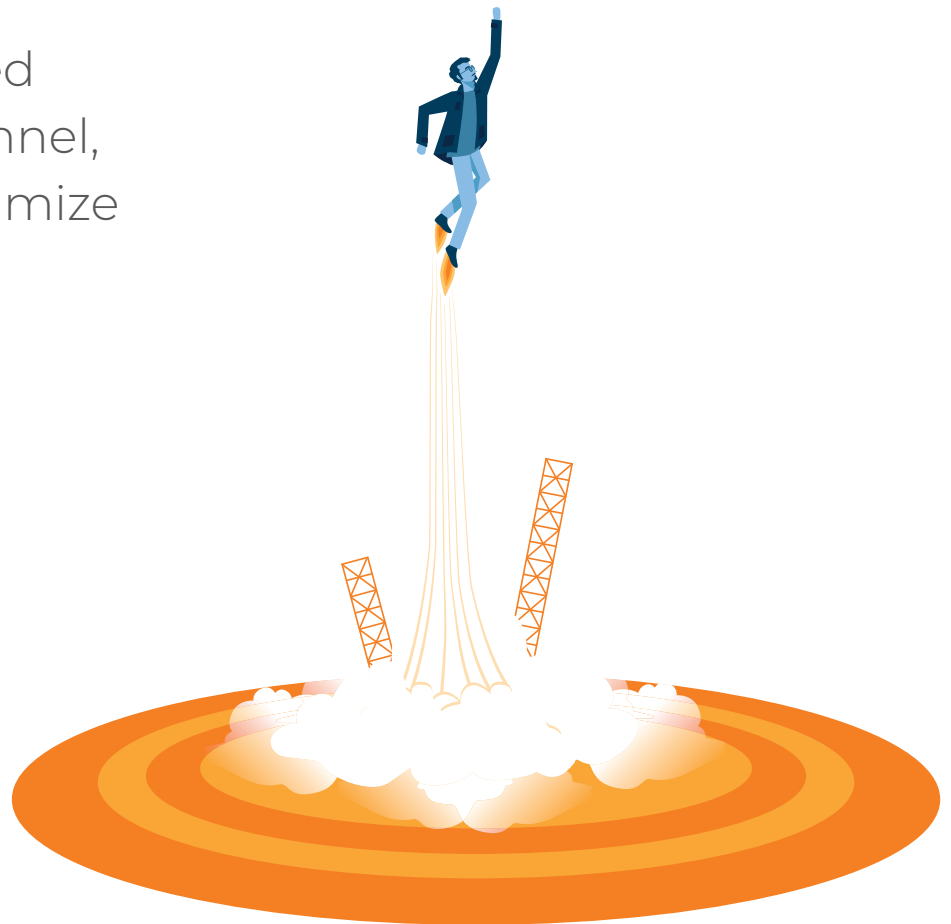
How Do You Know if You are Getting the Most Value For Your Business From Chat?

Individual Agent Performance Look at the average number of concurrent chat conversations, how long an agent spent in each chat, as well as idle time to determine which agents are mastering the channel. If several agents are demonstrating the same challenges (such as excessively long chat times or difficulty managing multiple conversations simultaneously), you can use the findings to augment your hiring and training processes.

How Do You Know if You are Getting the Most Value For Your Business From Chat?

Satisfaction Data Resolution rates, conversion data and post-chat surveys can help you determine whether the experience you provide is measuring up to customer expectations, uncover opportunities for process improvement and develop staffing and budget forecasts.

How Do You Know if You are Getting the Most Value For Your Business From Chat?

Visitor and Traffic Data Data obtained from customers arriving in the chat queue can reveal issues with self-serve processes that are difficult to navigate or simply are not working. Look at the number of customers using live chat and common points of entry to pinpoint where your web and self-service channels are falling short. And be sure to also look at optimizing the placement of static chat contact buttons on your site.

How Do You Know if You are Getting the Most Value For Your Business From Chat?

Depending on which element of the customer life-cycle your chat program is supporting (sales, post-sales, technical support, etc.), you may have additional measures of success, such as close rates post-contact or positive social feedback. Comparing chat data with phone contact data can also reveal if you are successfully containing customers within their original channel and minimizing cross-channel repeat activity.

Captured and used effectively, the data and insights you gather through your organization's chat interactions can help you improve your web presence, and drive higher self-serve usage and success rates, leading to lower support costs and a more effortless customer experience.

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Conclusion

Now that you understand how chat can provide added value and boost business impact, go forth and delight your customers.

For more information—and to get started on transforming your company—call 866-ALORICA or email sales@alorica.com.

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About Alorica

Alorica

Alorica is a leading provider of Business Process Outsourcing solutions that span the entire customer lifecycle. Good, glad we got that out of the way. Here's the deal —we think serving customers is awesome. And that's why, when it comes down to it, we really only do one thing—we make lives better...one interaction at a time.

PASSION · PERFORMANCE · POSSIBILITIES

These are the principles that guide us in helping others make better choices and informed decisions. They're more than words. They're our rally cry.

PASSION

Everything starts with conviction. A desire to obliterate the status quo, and the audacity to believe that we will. We're problem solvers. Question answerers.

Strategic dreamers. We see every interaction as an opportunity to create opportunities—for our customers, our clients, our colleagues and our communities.

PERFORMANCE

We're 110% committed to the end result. Onward and upward, it's all about taking our clients to the next level. We stay engaged. We mine new sources of inspiration. And we give it our all, no matter the challenge. They say go big or go home. We don't believe in the latter.

POSSIBILITIES

100,000 employees. Operations in 15 countries. Over 70% of our clients are Fortune 500 companies. So where do we go from here? Anywhere. Everywhere.

We're always innovating, evolving, imagining new ways to continuously improve. Some see the sky as the limit. We see the sky as a stepping stone.

WHAT'S IN OUR SECRET SAUCE?

A spoonful of customer care. A dash of technical support. A pinch of revenue generation. Equal parts receivables management, customer retention and reverse logistics. Fulfillment and B2B solutions, for sweetness. And finally, hosted contact center solutions, direct response and back office processing for that added kick.
Guess it's not so secret anymore, huh...

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